

Testimony in favor of Senate Bill 78 -- Stream Access  
Kenneth A. High, Helena, MT  
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My name is Ken High, and I am here to support passage of Senate Bill 78, which clarifies and improves the public's access to Montana's rivers and streams.

I am here both as a recreationist and as a Montana small-business owner. I have owned a continually growing business selling fly tying and fly fishing equipment for 16 years. That business continues to expand -- *and employ more people* -- every year because our state's natural beauty and its enlightened stream access policy attract hundreds of thousands of tourists annually. *And* my business is only one of hundreds throughout the state that depend on access to streams and rivers. These businesses are employing Montana workers and paying Montana taxes. Limiting stream access would *damage* a growing, very productive and *non-polluting* sector of our state's economy

I also speak as an enthusiastic outdoorsman. I *treasure* my ability to take a day off -- fishing on my own, or rafting, picnicking & birding with my wife, children and grandchildren. I have spent a lifetime working and paying taxes to help make sure I can enjoy these recreational opportunities. I would hope that this committee is not going to bow to the interests of rich landowners from California and Georgia and limit my ability to access sites -- *including bridges* -- that I, and many *thousands* of MT citizens paid for.

Montana has a long legal history establishing the public *right* to access the state's streams and rivers. I urge this committee to *honor* that precedent, to *protect* the many small businesses that rely on stream access, and to continue to guarantee to all Montanans access to *our* rivers and streams

*Thank you.*